2014-15 HAL & JEANETTE SegerSTROM
FAMILY FOUNDATION CLASSICAL SERIES

Performance begins at 8 p.m.; Preview talk with Alan Chapman begins at 7 p.m.

CARL ST.CLAIR • CONDUCTOR | DEAN ANTHONY • DIRECTOR
PACIFIC CHORALE — JOHN ALEXANDER • ARTISTIC DIRECTOR
ROBERT ISTAD • ASSISTANT CONDUCTOR AND CHORUSMASTER
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHILDREN’S CHORUS — LORI LOFTUS • FOUNDING DIRECTOR

Carmen
Georges Bizet (1838–1875)
Libretto by Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy

Act I: A square in Seville
Act II: Lilas Pastia’s Inn
INTERMISSION
Act III: The mountains
Act IV: A square in Seville

Cast
Carmen: Milena Kitic, mezzo-soprano
Don José: Andrew Richards, tenor
Micaëla: Elizabeth Caballero, soprano
Escamillo: Konstantin Smoriginas, bass-baritone
Mercédès: Sarah Larsen, mezzo-soprano
Frasquita: Amanda Opuszyński, soprano
Zuniga: Andrew Gangestad, bass
Moralès/Le Dancaire: Keith Harris, baritone
Le Remendado: Jonathan Blalock, tenor
Supernumeraries: Christine Gerena, Jessica Harper, Alana Isiguen, Chris Maze, Gregory Neal, Edgar Rodriguez, Steve Rosa, Anna Slauson

Technical Team
Matt Scarpino, scenic designer
Kathy Pryzgoda, lighting designer
Kathryn Wilson, costume coordinator
Ora Jewell-Busche, wig and make-up coordinator
William Pruett, props coordinator

Honorary Producers: Paul and Marybelle Musco

The Tuesday, Feb. 24, performance is generously sponsored by Symphony 100.
Background

Carmen is often called the world’s most popular opera even though, in the numbers race for productions and performances, it seems to lag slightly behind a few other hits such as Puccini’s La Bohème. Nevertheless, there is something about this opera that puts it ahead of all others in its familiarity and fascination; it’s the opera we’ve all grown up with, the one whose melodies we’re most likely to hear in the schoolyard or as elevator music. Its arias have the best joke lyrics (“Toreador-o, don’t spit on the floor-o...”). Most of all there is Carmen herself, the essential femme fatale, alluring and dangerous. Just what is it about her that makes her so irresistible to audiences, despite her total badness? In 1875, when Bizet was composing Carmen, the phrase “Gypsy girl” alone was sufficient to conjure a whole world of wanton sensuality and danger, and this world was the focus of Bizet’s source for his music drama: Prosper Mérimée’s novella Carmen, a first-person account of life in Spain among the culture we now know as Romani and an early example of fatal attraction.

For French composers, however, the pull of Spain was not just a matter of Gypsy exoticism. The Iberian Peninsula’s sun and warmth represented something dangerously erotic—a place of impulsive sensuality that presented a challenge to the elegance and discipline of French music. Their heady fascination with Spain shows in compositions such as Chabrier’s España, Lalo’s Symphonie espagnole and Ravel’s Rhapsodie espagnole, and it suited Bizet’s extraordinary ability to create a sense of place in his music. We hear this in the explosive opening bars of Carmen, which evoke the visceral excitement of the bull ring in Seville that will be the scene of Escamillo’s triumph and Carmen’s demise.

But almost immediately after we hear those smashing, cymbal-accented chords, we hear a second theme that takes Bizet’s drama beyond its source: Carmen’s preoccupation with fate. Against a foreboding background of tremolo strings, Carmen’s “fate theme” evokes the fatal destiny that looms ever closer for her. It is the reason why she defies authority and does anything it takes to assert her freedom. With these chords, before the action of the opera even begins, we can sense that Carmen will do anything it takes to get what she wants. But in the end, nothing will be enough. This preoccupation with free will versus destiny was a recurrent theme in music of the Late Romantic period, and in 1888—when Tchaikovsky was writing his fifth symphony—Carmen’s five-note “fate theme” was one of two that inspired the Russian composer in developing his own work on this subject. The other was the famous four-note theme of “fate knocking on the door” in Beethoven’s Symphony No. 5.

Bizet composed Carmen in 1875, when he was 37 and had a decent reputation as a composer, but was not classed as one of the most important in France; in fact, considering the high expectations of him in musical circles, his career so far had been something of a disappointment. He was one of the youngest pupils ever admitted to the famously rigorous Paris Conservatoire and, as one critic wrote, quickly learned everything the professors could teach. He also won most of the prizes available to be won, including the fabled Prix de Rome—the Conservatoire’s highest award for composition—at age 19. And though his early operas did not hint at the boldness of inspiration in Carmen, they did reveal the freshness of his melodic inspiration and his gift for evoking the vividly detailed, richly textured scenes in music. Eugène Cormon and Michel Carré, the librettists for his opera The Pearl Fishers (12 years earlier than Carmen), reportedly said “if we had known Bizet would write such beautiful music, we would have written a better libretto.” And just three years before Carmen, when Bizet composed the incidental music for the play L’Arlesienne, playwright Alphonse Daudet supposedly described his own play as “a glittering flop with the loveliest music in the world.” Tragically, Carmen would prove to be Bizet’s final masterpiece.

In Mérimée’s novella Carmen we learn more about Carmen’s doomed lover Don José than we see in the opera. He is depicted as a rather ordinary man with a troubled past who undergoes a rather extraordinary disintegration. This kind of story, representing female sexuality as a corrupting influence and southern peoples as dangerous, was common in pulp novels of Mérimée’s day; he wrote at a time when Gypsies were seen by most Europeans as a mysterious, filthy, dangerous people. But it’s possible that his view of this subject was more complex, since he had visited Spain and had a relationship with a Gypsy girl. When he returned home and wrote about his experiences, he described the girl as “savage and unsociable,” but his attraction to her was clear, and she may well have been the model for his Carmen.

Another source contemporaneous with Bizet was George Henry Borrow, a British writer and translator who explored Madrid, Granada, Seville and Cordoba. In The Gypsies of Spain, Borrow called them the Zincali, Gitanos or Bohemians, “wild and sybilline,” frequently beautiful but never vulgar. And, he added, they despised Christians. His down-to-earth characterization of the Gypsy woman is sympathetic in its fascination, if also patronizing: The Gitána is “addicted to and famous for fortune-telling,” he said; she is the one woman in the world who “deserves the title of sorceress... Mention to me a point of deviltry with which that woman is not acquainted, for she is a prophetess...a procuress...and a singer of obscene songs...Tenacious of the little she possesses, she is a cutpurse and a shoplifter whenever the opportunity shall offer.”

In 1875, the year Carmen was first produced, such characters were simply not seen on the operatic stage. Queen Victoria was still on the throne, and the moralists of her generation were in full cry. Nor were they alone in fighting a decency crusade; the Empress Eugénie had left a mark on Bizet’s France by imposing her rigid, Spanish-Catholic code on it. If such shocking material was to be introduced in opera,
Controversy erupted over Carmen even before the first rehearsals began. By the time of its premiere at the Opéra-Comique in Paris on March 3, 1875, arguments over the scandalous plot were raging in cafés and in the theater itself. Bizet was also criticized for producing it at the Opéra-Comique, which was considered a venue where middle-class families could count on wholesome entertainment... “A place where a man can take his wife and daughters.” The first performance of the opera brought the critics out in force, with some attacking the composer for imitating Wagner’s leitmotif technique. Others claimed that he, like Verdi and Wagner, was ruining singers’ voices by drowning them out with “dissonant” and “heavy” orchestral sound. But there were dissenters, including the writer Blaze de Bury, who praised Bizet and said he had “no doubt” about the composer’s future. Another critic praised the “huge talent in this musical score.”

The supposedly calamitous first-season failure of Carmen has entered the canon of music lore. Are the stories true? Probably not. The opera was performed 37 times at the Comique during its first run (though often to a half-empty house), and successfully revived during the next season. A real fiasco would have closed after just one performance, as Verdi’s Un Giorno di Regno and Puccini’s Madama Butterfly did. Or, in the worst possible scenario, the audience would have forced the curtain down in the middle of the show and made the impresario refund the ticket money, as sometimes happened in Paris.

When Bizet died, three months after the premiere of his wildly revolutionary opera, he knew it would survive. But could he have dreamed that it would become one of the most popular and influential works in the history of the theater, setting the parameters for a new structure and style in opera? Public and critical enthusiasm for Carmen only grows with time. Perhaps the first “daughter” of Carmen was Jules Massenet’s Manon (1884), whose amoral heroine seduces a young seminarian just as he is about to become a priest. From there, the raw brutality of Italian verismo was already within reach. Today, Carmen’s irresistibly passionate music and stark drama have transcended style and geography, and are embraced throughout the world.

The Story of the Opera
Act I

In a square in Seville near a tobacco factory, a group of soldiers comment on the passing scene while waiting for the changing of the guard. Micaëla appears, seeking José. Moràles tells her that “José is not yet on duty” and invites her to wait with them. She declines, saying she will return later. José arrives with the new guard, which is greeted and imitated by a crowd of children playing in the street.

The factory bell rings and the cigarette girls emerge for their break, exchanging banter with the soldiers. Carmen sings an habanera on
the contrary ways of love. When the soldiers urge her to choose a lover, she teasingly throws a flower to the unlikeliest of prospects: Don José, who has been ignoring her.

As the women return to the factory, Micaëla returns and, in a duet, gives José a letter and a kiss from his mother. Just as he seems ready to heed his mother’s wishes, there is a disturbance in the factory: Carmen has reportedly attacked a co-worker with a knife. Zuniga, the lieutenant in charge, orders José to tie her hands while he prepares the warrant for her arrest. But when Carmen flirts with José and presses him to help her escape, he agrees to free her hands. As she runs off laughing, José is arrested for dereliction of duty.

Act II

A month after her botched arrest, Carmen and her friends Frasquita and Mercédès are at Lillas Pastia’s Inn, entertaining Zuniga and other officers. Carmen learns that José has been released from detention; outside the inn, a procession adoringly heralds the arrival of the swaggering toreador Escamillo, who enters and presents himself with the heroic “Toreador Song.” He is immediately drawn to Carmen, but she calculatingly ignores him. Lillas Pastia hustles the crowds and the soldiers away.

When only Carmen, Frasquita and Mercédès remain, the smugglers Dancaïre and Remendado arrive. They reveal plans to dispose of some recently acquired goods. Frasquita and Mercédès are keen to help them, but Carmen refuses, since she wishes to wait for José. After the smugglers leave, José arrives. Carmen dances just for him, but when he hears the bugle call for retreat to the barracks, he says he must return to duty. Carmen contemptuously mocks him, and he responds with proof of his love: the flower that she threw to him in the square, and that he saved throughout his detention. But she is unconvinced, and demands that he leave with her. José refuses, but as he prepares to depart, Zuniga enters looking for Carmen. He and José fight, and are separated by the returning smugglers, who restrain Zuniga. Having attacked a superior officer, José now has no choice but to join Carmen and the smugglers.

Act III

As dawn breaks over the mountains, Carmen and José enter with the smugglers and their contraband. Carmen has by this time grown bored with José, and scornfully tells him to go back to his mother. Frasquita and Mercédès amuse themselves by reading their fortunes, finding wealth and romance in the cards. But when Carmen joins them, she sees only one fate in the cards: her death, and José’s. The women depart to deal with the local customs officers, placing José on guard duty.

Micaëla enters with a guide, seeking José and determined to rescue him from Carmen. On hearing a gunshot she hides in fear; it is José, who has fired at an intruder who proves to be Escamillo. José’s pleasure at meeting the bullfighter turns to anger when Escamillo reveals his feelings for Carmen. They fight but are interrupted by the returning smugglers, and the departing Escamillo invites everyone to his next bullfight in Seville. Micaëla, who has been hiding, is discovered; at first, José will not leave with her despite Carmen’s mockery, but he agrees to go when told that his mother is dying. As he departs, vowing he will return, Escamillo is heard in the distance, singing the toreador’s song.

Act IV

At the bullring in Seville, a jubilant crowd including Zuniga, Frasquita and Mercédès awaits the arrival of the bullfighters. Escamillo enters triumphantly with Carmen, and the two declare their love; then Escamillo enters the ring. Frasquita warns Carmen that José is nearby, but Carmen insists she will speak to him and face her fate. She and José confront each other in the now-empty square with the cheers of the arena in the background. As he pleads vainly for her to return to him, the tension between them builds until she finally throws down the ring he gave her and attempts to enter the arena. He stabs her, and as Escamillo is acclaimed by the crowds, Carmen dies and José awaits his arrest for her murder.

Michael Clive is a cultural reporter living in the Litchfield Hills of Connecticut. He is program annotator for Pacific Symphony and Louisiana Philharmonic, and editor-in-chief for The Santa Fe Opera.

Thank you to our Tuesday, Feb. 24, concert sponsor

Symphony 100

Symphony 100 is an exclusive membership group that offers adult music education opportunities and several unique events or field trips available only to members. Membership is limited to 100 women, who support special projects of the Symphony through an annual contribution of $1,000.
In 2014-15, Music Director Carl St.Clair celebrates his landmark 25th anniversary season with Pacific Symphony. He is one of the longest tenured conductors of the major American orchestras. St.Clair’s lengthy history solidifies the strong relationship he has forged with the musicians and the community. His continuing role also lends stability to the organization and continuity to his vision for the Symphony’s future. Few orchestras can claim such rapid artistic development as Pacific Symphony—the largest orchestra formed in the United States in the last 50 years—due in large part to St.Clair’s leadership.

During his tenure, St.Clair has become widely recognized for his musically distinguished performances, his commitment to building outstanding educational programs and his innovative approaches to programming. Among his creative endeavors are: the vocal initiative, “Symphonic Voices,” inaugurated in 2011-12 with the concert-opera production of La Bohème, followed by Tosca in 2012-13, La Traviata in 2013-14 and Carmen in 2014-15; the creation five years ago of a series of multimedia concerts featuring inventive formats called “Music Unwound”; and the highly acclaimed American Composers Festival, which celebrates its 15th anniversary in 2014-15 with a program of music by André Previn.

St.Clair’s commitment to the development and performance of new works by composers is evident in the wealth of commissions and recordings by the Symphony. The 2014-15 season continues a recent slate of recordings that has included three newly released CDs by today’s leading composers: Richard Danielpour’s Toward a Season of Peace, released in 2013-14, Philip Glass’ The Passion of Ramakrishna, and Michael Daugherty’s Mount Rushmore and The Gospel According to Sister Aimee, both released in 2012-13. Two more are due for release over the next few years, including William Bolcom’s Songs of Lorca and Prometheus and James Newton Howard’s I Would Plant a Tree. St.Clair has led the orchestra in other critically acclaimed albums including two piano concertos of Lukas Foss; Danielpour’s An American Requiem and Elliot Goldenthal’s Fire Water Paper: A Vietnam Oratorio with cellist Yo-Yo Ma. Other composers commissioned by the Symphony include Goldenthal in a world premiere in 2013-14, as well as earlier works by Bolcom, Zhou Long, Tobias Picker, Frank Ticheli and Chen Yi, Curt Cacioppo, Stephen Scott, Jim Self (Pacific Symphony’s principal tubist) and Christopher Theofandis.

In 2006-07, St.Clair led the orchestra’s historic move into its home in the Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall at Segerstrom Center for the Arts. The move came on the heels of the landmark 2005-06 season that included St.Clair leading the Symphony on its first European tour—nine cities in three countries playing before capacity houses and receiving extraordinary responses and reviews.

From 2008-10, St.Clair was general music director for the Komische Oper in Berlin, where he led successful new productions such as La Traviata (directed by Hans Neuenfels). He also served as general music director and chief conductor of the German National Theater and Staatskapelle (GNTS) in Weimar, Germany, where he led Wagner’s Ring Cycle to critical acclaim. He was the first non-European to hold his position at the GNTS; the role also gave him the distinction of simultaneously leading one of the newest orchestras in America and one of the oldest in Europe.

In 2014, St.Clair assumed the position as music director of the National Symphony Orchestra in Costa Rica. His international career also has him conducting abroad several months a year, and he has appeared with orchestras throughout the world. He was the principal guest conductor of the Radio Sinfonieorchester Stuttgart from 1998-2004, where he completed a three-year recording project of the Villa–Lobos symphonies. He has also appeared with orchestras in Israel, Hong Kong, Japan, Australia, New Zealand and South America, and summer festivals worldwide.

In North America, St.Clair has led the Boston Symphony Orchestra (where he served as assistant conductor for several years), New York Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic and the San Francisco, Seattle, Detroit, Atlanta, Houston, Indianapolis, Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver symphonies, among many.

A strong advocate of music education for all ages, St.Clair has been essential to the creation and implementation of the Symphony’s education programs including Pacific Symphony Youth Ensembles, Sunday Casual Connections, OC Can You Play With Us, arts-x-press and Class Act.
Carl St.Clair: Opera from Both Sides of the House

BY PETER LEFEVRE

In addition to superior conducting technique, a quick list of the skills a good opera conductor might also need to have includes: the memory of a card shark, the stamina of a mountaineer, the flexibility of a yoga teacher, the diplomatic skills of a hostage negotiator and the hide of an armadillo.

And, according to Walter Ducloux, Carl St.Clair’s mentor at the University of Texas, you also ought to know how to sew a costume. “Ducloux believed that in order to become a good opera conductor you had to know opera from both sides of the pit,” says St.Clair. “It was really a 19th-century Germanic training in the middle of south Texas. I sewed costumes, I did props, I built sets. He really wanted me and the singers to be part of the opera studio and learn what was going on. There was no ‘I’m only this and will only do that.’”

In practice, St.Clair’s training with Ducloux—a former pupil of Wilhelm Furtwängler—was essentially an opera-conducting background. Ducloux believed you had to conduct opera—that all great conductors conducted opera—and he trained his students accordingly, in the Old Style.

“I was always a member of the opera either as set crew, design crew, calling cues, conducting, directing scenes or playing scenes on the piano,” says St.Clair. “[Ducloux] was one of the last few that would actually conduct the opera, serve as stage director, teach the dance steps, coach the singers, prepare the singers and orchestra, design the sets and costumes, the whole nine yards. He was the last of a breed of conductors that knew the opera house from every angle.”

St.Clair has taken those early formative experiences with him throughout his career. In addition to the dozens of opera productions he has led in the U.S., he has also served as general music director of the Staatkapelle Weimar and the Komische Oper Berlin. As of late, he has been bringing opera to Pacific Symphony audiences, following the collapse of Opera Pacific in 2008. The operas presented so far—one per year—are the tried-and-true. Still, that leaves a lot of choices, and the Symphony looks carefully at what might work best.

“One, the works we choose have great orchestral scores,” says St.Clair, “and two, the operas we choose don’t depend necessarily on sets and costumes. They’re much more about the interactions and emotional exchanges between characters, not what kind of chair they’re in.”

As for bringing an annual opera into the symphonic season, it’s a substantial change of gears for the man at the podium.

“It’s like looking at a car,” says St.Clair. “The motor is something you don’t see, but it propels the beautiful outer shell through space. The orchestra provides a motor to the opera. The orchestra’s role is to support what’s on stage so it can live and flourish. Lots of flexibility night to night, moment to moment. There may be more emotion on one night than another, or this person ran further or faster. There are lots of variables you don’t have in a concert. It’s unpredictable what will happen at any given time.”

In other words, you need to ride the emotional wave, something St.Clair is quite used to doing.

“When I went to Weimar, the opportunity afforded to me that would be the highlight of my four years there was the Ring cycle. I was one of the real fortunate ones to have had that opportunity, and I know it has helped shape me as a musician and as a conductor. When you climb that musical Everest, a lot of things seem easy.”

This season, Pacific Symphony brings Carmen to the stage (Feb. 19, 21 and 24), with Milena Kitić handling the title role, joined by Pacific Chorale and the Southern California Children’s Chorus.

“We’re so fortunate to have one of the consummate Carmens in our midst with Milena Kitić, who’s on faculty at Chapman University,” he says. “She’s sung this role in the major houses of the world. It’s her role, and it’s wonderful she’s here. And we’re surrounding her with a cast that has sung these roles numerous times in major houses. We have wonderful support here, there are so many people that are opera fanatics and that have embraced these productions. It’s been something we’ve tried that has been so successful, we just have to keep doing it again and again, and we look forward to continuing well into the future.”


**ARTISTS**

Enjoying a 25-plus year career as a performer, Dean Anthony was often referred to as “The Tumbling Tenor.” He created more than 100 roles and was highly praised as a character artist for his vocal, dramatic, physical and acrobatic abilities. Since then, Anthony has established himself as a dynamic stage director and teacher on the operatic scene with his energetic, gritty and physical style of work. This season, he joined the faculty at the University of Memphis as opera stage director, and will direct *Pirates of Penzance* with Nashville Opera, *La Bohème* at Pensacola Opera and *Rigoletto* and *The Ballad of Baby Doe* with the Janiec Opera Company at Brevard Music Center, where he has served as director of opera since 2013. He was also the stage director with the Center of Contemporary Opera on the new opera *Falling Angel* by J. Mark Scearce. From 2009-12, Anthony was the resident stage director and director of production at Shreveport Opera.

Recently, he directed *Carmen* with Tulsa Opera and Pensacola Opera, *Glory Denied* by Tom Cipullo with Ft. Worth Opera Festival, *Carmen* with Florentine Opera, *Elixir Of Love* with Opera Delaware, *Barber of Seville* with Opera Naples, *Falstaff* with Winter Opera of St. Louis, *Sweeney Todd* with St. Petersburg Opera, *I Pagliacci* with Shreveport Opera, *The Magic Flute* with Opera on the James, and *Trouble in Tahiti* and *Arias and Barcarolles* at the University of Kansas.

**DEAN ANTHONY**  
STAGE DIRECTOR

A star of the Belgrade Opera, Serbia, Milena Kitić made her debut with the National Theater in Belgrade in 1989 as Olga in Tchaikovsky’s *Eugene Onegin* and performed for eight years in a wide range of roles from Rosina in Rossini’s *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* to Cherubino in Mozart’s *Le Nozze di Figaro*.

From 1997-99, Kitić performed with the Essen Opera in Germany, and performed as Carmen throughout Germany, Austria, The Netherlands, Belgium and the Czech Republic. During the 1998-99 season, Kitić made her U.S. debut as Eboli in Verdi’s *Don Carlo* with Palm Beach Opera. In 1999, she made her Carnegie Hall debut with Opera Orchestra of New York as Emilia in *Otello*. In 2002, Kitić debuted with the Washington D.C. Opera as Carmen, and she was praised for her role of Giulietta in *Les Contes d’ Hoffmann* with the Los Angeles Opera. In 2003, she debuted with Opera Pacific as Herodias in *Salome* and performed the company’s benefit concert with Plácido Domingo and conductor John De Main.

Highlights from 2005-08 include her debut in *Samson and Delilah* with Opera Pacific, her role as Meg in Verdi’s *Falstaff* with Los Angeles Opera, her role as Emilia in Verdi’s *Otello* at the Ravinia Festival and debuting at the Metropolitan Opera as Carmen. In 2007, Kitić became the inaugural recipient of the artist-in-residence award given by Chapman University, where she is currently an adjunct professor and master class instructor. She also leads classes at USC and UC Irvine.

Kitić currently serves as chair for artistic excellence for Los Angeles Opera with whom she recently performed the role of Suzuki in *Madame Butterfly*, Carmen and Albine in *Thais* with Domingo in the role of Athanel.

**MILENA KITIĆ**  
MEZZO-SOPRANO / CARmen

Andrew Richards has won international recognition as an exciting lirico-spinto tenor in theaters including the Berlin State Opera, Teatro alla Scala, Milan, Opera-Bastille, Royal Opera Covent Garden, Frankfurt Opera, Bavarian State Opera, Munich, Theatre Royale de la Monnaie, Brussels, Vienna State Opera, Teatro Giuseppe Verdi, Trieste, Teatro Comunale of Bologna, Teatro Massimo, Palermo, Teatro Maestranza, Seville, L’Opera Comique in Paris, L’Opera de Marseille, Teatro Giuseppe Verdi, Trieste, Le Opera de Nice, Semperoper Dresden, Hamburg State Opera, as well at the Arena di Verona, Puccini Festival in Torre del Lago, Bregenz Festival and in Aix-en-Provence. He has won special acclaim as Don Jose in Carmen, Cavaradossi in Tosca, the title role in Don Carlos, Pollione in Norma and as Werther.

In 2010, Richards sang his first Wagnerian role, appearing at the Stuttgart Opera in a new production of *Parsifal*. He also starred as Parsifal at the Theatre de la Monnaie in Brussels in their new production of the work in 2011.

In the 2012-13 season, Richards made his Metropolitan Opera debut as Don Jose in Carmen. He then sang the role of Cavaradossi in Tosca with Stuttgart. He also appeared in Stuttgart as *Parsifal*. Engagements for the 2013-14 season included Licinio Spontini’s *La Vestale* at the Theatre des Champs Elysees in Paris and his debut as Laca in *Jenufa* at the Theatre Royale de la Monnaie in Brussels.

**ANDREW RICHARDS**  
TENOR / DON JOSÉ
Soprano Elizabeth Caballero’s dramatically compelling interpretation of her signature role, Violetta in La Traviata, has led to recent engagements with Florentine Opera, Madison Opera, Pacific Symphony and the Orlando Philharmonic.

She was engaged to perform the role of Musetta in Puccini’s La Bohème for the Metropolitan Opera after grabbing the audience’s attention in the role at New York City Opera. She returned for their production of Carmen as part of The Metropolitan Opera: Live in HD series.

Highlights of her 2014-15 season include a return to Seattle Opera to sing Donna Elvira in Don Giovanni, a performance of Carmina Burana with Florida Orchestra and the title role in Daniel Catán’s Spanish opera Florencia en el Amazonas with Nashville Opera.

Her career continues to gain immense momentum since her European debut as Magda in Puccini’s operetta La Rondine at Teatro Giuseppe Verdi. This led to command performances at international companies, including Cio-Cio San in Madama Butterfly at the Staatsoper Berlin and Anne Trulove in The Rake’s Progress with the Brazilian Symphony Orchestra.

Caballero has garnered a reputation as “an intelligently responsive actress” (Opera News) after a string of role debuts throughout the United States including Donna Anna in Don Giovanni at Madison Opera, Susanna in Le Nozze di Figaro at Seattle Opera and Nedda in Leoncavallo’s Pagliacci and Carmina Burana with Hawai’i Opera Theatre. A house favorite at Florida Grand Opera, she dazzled audiences as Contessa Almaviva in Le Nozze di Figaro, Liu in Turandot, Mimi in La Bohème, Micaëla in Carmen and Magda in La Rondine.

Bass-baritone Kostas Smoriginas studied at the Lithuanian Music and Theatre Academy, and after moving to London in 2005 and representing his country at the BBC Cardiff Singer of the World Competition, he spent two years at the Royal College of Music before joining the Jette Parker Young Artist Programme at the Royal Opera House in 2007.

Smoriginas made his U.S. opera debut in 2010 as Figaro in Le Nozze di Figaro at Washington National Opera. He returned to the U.K. as Escamilllo in Carmen with Opera North, having made his debut in the role at the Berlin Staatsoper. He also sang Colline in La Bohème at the Royal Opera House and Tomsky in Pique Dame with The Israeli Opera.

Highlights of recent seasons include debuts at Teatro alla Scala and Opera de Bordeaux, and performances in Carmen with the Berlin Philharmonic, Don Giovanni at Teatro Municipal in Chile, Eugene Onegin and Così fan Tutte at the V nilius City Opera, Carmen at the Semperoper Dresden, the Royal Opera House and Covent Garden and as Papageno in The Magic Flute in Washington.


Praised as “sizzling,” “riveting” and possessing a “plummy, ripe mezzo,” Sarah Larsen debuted with The Santa Fe Opera as Mercédès in Carmen for their 2014 summer festival. Upcoming engagements include the alto soloist in Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9 and Duruflé’s Requiem with Orchestra Seattle and a return to Seattle Opera for her role debut as the Komponist in Ariadne auf Naxos.

An alumna of the Seattle Opera Young Artist Program, Larsen returned to Seattle Opera for their 2013-14 season as Maddalena in Rigoletto, the Secretary in The Consul and La Muse/Nicklausse (cover) in Les Contes d’Hoffmann. Previous roles with the company include Mercédès in Carmen, Suzuki in Madama Butterfly, Tisbe in La Cenerentola and the First Touriere in Suor Angelica on the mainstage, along with Charlotte in Werther and Giulietta di Kelbar in Un Giorno di Regno with the Young Artist Program. Recent engagements include Larsen’s debut with The Glimmerglass Festival as Neris in Medea, and she created the role of Sarelda in John Musto and Mark Campbell’s comic opera The Inspector with the Wolf Trap Foundation. She was lauded as “dynamic,” possessing “considerable tonal nuance” and “a rich, powerful voice.”

Larsen grew up in Roseville, Minn. and attended Simpson College and Rice University. She continued her training with residencies at the Aspen Opera Theater Center, Sarasota Opera, Virginia Opera, Wolf Trap Opera, The Glimmerglass Festival, The Santa Fe Opera and Seattle Opera.
Amanda Opuszynski, a native of Manchester, Conn., is a graduate of the University of Michigan and the University of Maryland Opera Studio. As a Seattle Opera Young Artist, she has performed the roles of the Prima Donna in Viva la Mamma! and Donna Elvira in Don Giovanni. Opuszynski covered the role of Kitty in Menotti’s The Last Savage as a member of the Santa Fe Opera Apprentice Singer Program in 2011. Her other roles include Adina in L’Elisir d’Amore and Musetta in La Bohème. Opuszynski was a member of the Wolf Trap Opera Studio in 2009 and has also appeared with the Ohio Light Opera. She won an Encouragement Award in the Middle-Atlantic Regional Finals of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions 2009-10. Opuszynski makes her Seattle Opera mainstage debut this season as Frasquita in Carmen and returns to the Young Artists Program as Sophie in Werther and Norina in Don Pasquale.

Accomplished bass Andrew Gangestad has been applauded for his dark, rich sound and strong musicality by audiences throughout the world. Recently, he returned to the Metropolitan Opera for Wozzeck, performed as Sprecher in Die Zauberflöte with Lyric Opera of Kansas City and Alidoro in La Cenerentola with Opera Omaha. In coming seasons, he will cover Colline in La Bohème and Sam in Un Ballo in Maschera at the Metropolitan Opera, perform Zaccaria in Verdi’s Nabucco at Opera Carolina and appear as the Captain in Daniel Catán’s Florencia en el Amazonas with Nashville Opera.

Gangestad is widely known for his interpretation of Leporello in Don Giovanni, which he has performed with the Lyric Opera of Kansas City, Sarasota Opera, Opera Pacific and Arizona Opera. His recent international highlights include Ramfis in Aïda with the Bregenz Festival in Austria and in his debut with Welsh National Opera and the title role in Le Nozze di Figaro at the Macao International Music Festival.

Since his Metropolitan Opera debut in Berg’s Lulu, Gangestad has returned each season, having performed roles such as Brander in La Damnation de Faust, Tom in Un Ballo in Maschera and Colline in La Bohème, among many more. Also a favorite of Seattle Opera, there he has performed such roles as Zuniga in Carmen, Tom in Un Ballo in Maschera, Alidoro in La Cenerentola and Leporello in Don Giovanni.

Raised for the distinctive warmth of his voice, clear diction and exceptional musicianship, American baritone Keith Harris is captivating audiences in his performances on both operatic and concert stages. This season, Harris performs Albert in Werther with Mobile Opera, the baritone solo in Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9 with New Haven Symphony and returns to the Metropolitan Opera for their production of The Merry Widow.

Recent performances include Valentín in Faust with Toledo Opera, the Count in Le Nozze di Figaro at the Bar Harbor Music Festival, Marullo in Rigoletto with the Boston Youth Symphony Orchestra, Silvio in Pagliacci with Opera Tampa and several appearances with the Festival lyrique international de Belle-Île en Mer in France, including Belcore in L’Elisir d’Amore, Lago in Otello, Ford in Falstaff and, this past summer, Tonio in Pagliacci.

No stranger to musical theater, Harris performed as Billy Bigelow in Carousel, Anthony Hope in Sweeney Todd, Pirate Bras Pique in Naughty Marietta and as The Music Man with Baltimore Actors’ Theatre. He has appeared with Seattle Opera, Santa Fe Opera, Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, Holders Festival in Barbados, Nevada Opera, Opera of East Texas, El Paso Opera and Skagit Opera. Noted roles in Harris’ repertoire also include Guglielmo in Così fan Tutte, Figaro in Il Barbiere di Siviglia, Escamillo in Carmen, Papageno in Die Zauberflöte, Athanaël in Thaïs and Dandini in La Cenerentola.
The New York Times states, “Jonathan Blalock is riveting in the title role: his voice sweet and true, his thin smile telegraphing Paul’s honeyed contempt for his working class surroundings in a steel-dominated Pittsburgh.” In the 2013-14 season, he debuted with the Washington National Opera in An American Soldier, The Portland Symphony in The Magic of Christmas, San Antonio Opera in The Fantastic Mr. Fox and West Edge Opera in Hydrogen Jukebox. In 2015, he debuts with Opera Roanoke as Ramiro in La Cenerentola, and reprises his role of Don Ottavio in his company debut with Cedar Rapids Opera in Don Giovanni.

Blalock recently completed two seasons as an apprentice with Santa Fe Opera, where he covered two Rossini roles: Rodrigo in La Donna del Lago and Condlumiero in Maometto II. Highly acclaimed for his work in 20th- and 21st-century opera, Blalock has appeared in a number of world premieres, including The Secret Agent with the Center for Contemporary Opera in New York and the Armel Festival in Hungary and Paul’s Case with Urban Arias.

Other career highlights include Don Ottavio in Don Giovanni with Nevada Opera; Nemorino in L’Elisir d’Amore with Opera in Williamsburg; Handel’s Messiah with the Lexington Philharmonic and Winston-Salem Symphony, Carmina Burana with Las Cruces Symphony, Tonio in La Fille du Régiment with International Vocal Arts Institute in both Israel and Montreal, Count Almaviva in Il Barbiere di Siviglia with Opera Company of Middlebury and Le Remendado in Carmen with Fort Worth Opera.

In response to requests for a child-focused organization, the Southern California Children’s Chorus (SCCC), directed by Lori Loftus, was founded in 1996 as an independent, nonprofit organization dedicated to “enriching children’s lives through distinguished choral music education and world-class performance.” Over 300 children are enrolled in a sequential choral program consisting of seven choirs: Ensemble, Concert, Advanced, Intermediate, Apprentice, Education and World Class Performance. “Over 300 children are enrolled in a sequential choral program consisting of seven choirs: Ensemble, Concert, Advanced, Intermediate, Apprentice, Primary and Kinder levels. Guided by a talented and diverse board of directors and a highly skilled musical and administrative staff, choral members perform locally throughout the year at special events and venues like Segerstrom Center for the Arts. Auditions are held in May, August and early September. The SCCC is dedicated to making its programs available to children from all economic backgrounds and providing scholarships and other forms of assistance to families in need.

Matt Scarpino, scenic designer

Matt Scarpino’s scenic design credits include The Radio Hour at Segerstrom Center; Proof, Comedy of Errors, The Drowsy Chaperone and As You Like It at Concordia University Irvine; Les Misérables, Macbeth, Spamalot, Thoroughly Modern Millie, Spring Awakening, The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee and The Full Monty at The Landis Auditorium for Performance Riverside; American Clock, Rhinoceros and Cole A Musical Revue at Citrus College; Cabaret, Macbeth and The Man of La Mancha at California State University, San Bernardino; Chicago, Art and The Laramie Project at the Armstrong Theatre for Torrance Theatre Company; and Gunmetal Blues and Striking 12 for Ensemble Theatre Company of Santa Barbara. Scarpino holds a MFA in scenic design and technical direction from California State University, Fullerton. In 2012, he started Sets Unlimited, offering design and fabrication services for the theater and live event industry.

Kathy Pryzgoda, lighting designer

Kathy Pryzgoda has been a lighting designer for the past 25 years. Her diverse background includes lighting design for large commercial lighting projects, architectural lighting, residential, theatre, event and TV lighting design. Pryzgoda received a bachelor of arts degree in theatre from UCLA. She has designed lighting for such companies as Long Beach Opera, Los Angeles Classical Ballet and the Jazz Tap Ensemble. In addition to theatre, Pryzgoda was lighting designer/lighting director for Channel One News between 1992 and 2002, where she received three Broadcast Design International Gold Awards.

Kathryn Wilson, costume coordinator

Kathryn Wilson has been designing costumes professionally for the past 10 years and is currently on the adjunct faculty at Chapman University. She received her M.F.A. in costume design at the University of California, Irvine. Her recent shows as costume designer include Urinetown, Picasso at Lapin Agile, Macbeth, Godspell, Hedda Gabler, Lend Me a Tenor, Trojan Women, The Tempest, School for Scandal, Noh Plays, Our Country’s Good (Chapman University), Comedy of Errors, Julius Caesar, Two Gentlemen of Verona, As You Like It, Merchant of Venice, The Tempest, Henry V, The Taming of the Shrew, Romeo and Juliet (Shakespeare Orange County), Hansel and Gretel (UC Irvine) and Machiavelli (Hayworth Theater).
Ora Jewell-Busche, wig and make-up coordinator

Ora Jewell-Busche is a wig and makeup designer who has spent the last decade working in opera, theater, dance and film, primarily in the Chicago area. Her work has been seen on the stages of the Lyric Opera of Chicago, Chicago Shakespeare Theater, Lyric Opera of the North, Lookingglass Theater, Northlight Theater and River North Dance Chicago, to name a few. She is a recent transplant to Los Angeles.

Artistic Director of Pacific Chorale since 1972, John Alexander is one of America’s most respected choral conductors. His inspired leadership both on the podium and as an advocate for the advancement of the choral art has garnered national and international admiration and acclaim.

Alexander’s long and distinguished career has encompassed conducting hundreds of choral and orchestral performances nationally and in 27 countries around the globe. He has conducted his singers with orchestras throughout Europe, Asia, the former Soviet Union and South America and, closer to home, with Pacific Symphony, Pasadena Symphony, Musica Angelica and the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra. Equally versatile whether on the podium or behind the scenes, Alexander has prepared choruses for many of the world’s most outstanding orchestral conductors, including Zubin Mehta, Pierre Boulez, Seiji Ozawa, Michael Tilson Thomas, Leonard Slatkin, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Gustavo Dudamel, Lukas Foss, Max Rudolf, Carl St.Clair, Gerard Schwarz, Marin Alsop, John Mauceri, John Williams and Keith Lockhart.

A proponent of contemporary American music, Alexander is noted for the strong representation of American works and composers in his programming. He has conducted many premieres of works by composers such as Jake Heggie, Morten Lauridsen, Eric Whitacre, Frank Ticheli and James Hopkins.

Alexander retired in spring 2006 from his position as director of choral studies at California State University, Fullerton, having been awarded the honor of professor emeritus. From 1970 to 1996, he held the position of director of choral studies at California State University, Northridge. Alexander continues his involvement in the pre-professional training of choral conductors. He is in demand as a teacher, clinician, and adjudicator in festivals, seminars and workshops across the United States. In 2003, Chorus America honored him with the establishment of the “John Alexander Conducting Faculty Chair” for their national conducting workshops.

Alexander’s numerous awards include the “Michael Korn Founders Award for Development of the Professional Choral Art” from Chorus America (2008); The “Distinguished Faculty Member” award from California State University, Fullerton (2006); the Helena Modjeska Cultural Legacy Award (2003); the “Outstanding Individual Artist” Award (2000) from Arts Orange County; the “Gershwin Award” (1990), presented by the County of Los Angeles in recognition of his cultural leadership in that city; and the “Outstanding Professor” Award (1976) from California State University, Northridge.

Robert Istad is the assistant conductor of Pacific Chorale and director of choral studies at California State University, Fullerton, where he conducts the University Singers and Concert Choir, in addition to teaching courses in conducting, advanced interpretation and literature. He has prepared choruses for Esa-Pekka Salonen and the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Carl St.Clair and Pacific Symphony, Sir Andrew Davis and the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Nicholas McGegan and the Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra and Keith Lockhart and the Boston Pops Esplanade Orchestra, as well as conductors Bramwell Tovey, Eric Whitacre, Giancarlo Guerrero, Marin Alsop, George Fenton, John Alexander, William Dehning, David Lockington and Mark Mandarano. Istad received his bachelor of arts degree in music from Augustana College in Rock Island, Ill., his master of music degree in choral conducting from California State University, Fullerton, and his doctor of musical arts degree in choral music at the University of Southern California. Istad is also the artistic director of the Long Beach Camerata Singers and Long Beach Bach Festival.
Founded in 1968, Pacific Chorale is internationally recognized for exceptional artistic expression, stimulating American-focused programming, and influential education programs. Pacific Chorale presents a substantial performance season of its own at Segerstrom Center for the Arts and is sought regularly to perform with the nation’s leading symphonies. Under the inspired guidance of Artistic Director John Alexander, Pacific Chorale has infused an Old World art form with California’s hallmark innovation and cultural independence.

Pacific Chorale is comprised of 140 professional and volunteer singers. In addition to its long-standing partnership with Pacific Symphony, the Chorale has performed with the Los Angeles Philharmonic in Disney Hall on numerous occasions. Other noted collaborations include the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra, the Boston Symphony, the National Symphony, and the Long Beach, Pasadena, Riverside and San Diego symphonies. John Alexander and the Chorale have toured extensively in Europe, South America and Asia, performing in London, Paris, Belgium, Germany, Estonia, Russia, Spain, Brazil, Argentina, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Beijing and Hong Kong, and collaborating with the London Symphony, L’Orchestre Lamoureaux of Paris, the National Orchestra of Belgium, the China National Symphony, the Hong Kong Sinfonietta, the Estonian National Symphony and the Orquesta Sinfonica Nacional of Argentina.

Pacific Chorale’s chamber choir, the John Alexander Singers, is a fully professional vocal ensemble of 24 singers recognized for their musical excellence across a broad range of musical periods and styles. The John Alexander Singers perform regularly in concert venues throughout Southern California. In addition to extensive collaborations with Musica Angelica, Southern California’s premier period instrument orchestra, the John Alexander Singers have performed with the Kronos Quartet, Mark Morris Dance Company, The Royal Ballet of London, the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra and Pacific Symphony, and on the Los Angeles Philharmonic’s “Green Umbrella” new music series. In 2012, the John Alexander Singers presented the Paris premiere of David Lang’s Pulitzer Prize-winning The Little Match Girl Passion.

Pacific Chorale has received numerous awards from Chorus America, the service organization for North American choral groups, including the prestigious “Margaret Hillis Achievement Award for Choral Excellence,” the first national “Educational Outreach Award,” and the 2005 ASCAP Chorus America Alice Parker Award for adventurous programming.

The Chorale’s outstanding performances can be heard on eight CDs, including Nocturne, a collection of American a cappella works conducted by John Alexander; Songs of Eternity by James F. Hopkins and Voices by Stephen Paulus, conducted by John Alexander and featuring Pacific Symphony; a holiday recording, Christmas Times Is Here, released on the Gothic Records label; a live concert recording of Sergei Rachmaninov’s Vespers; and four recordings released by Pacific Symphony, including Eliot Goldenthal’s Fire, Water, Paper: A Vietnam Oratorio, Richard Danielpour’s An American Requiem, Philip Glass’ The Passion of Ramakrishna, and Michael Daugherty’s Mount Rushmore, all conducted by Carl St.Clair. Pacific Chorale’s newest recording, featuring the complete choral music of Frank Ticheli, was released in 2013. Forthcoming projects include works by Jake Heggie.